Sparrow population

2111. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a study was conducted in London on the decline of sparrow population;

(b) whether it is a fact that sparrow population is decreasing in India also; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to check the decline?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a)Yes Sir.

(b) Bombay Natural History Society has reported a decline in house sparrow population in certain cities of the country. This is due to rapid urbanization and consequent loss of habitat as well as loss of nesting material in these cities. However, the sparrow population is still widely distributed and there is no immediate threat to its existence.

(c) Large scale afforestation activities in urban and rural areas improve the availability of habitat of various bird species including sparrow.

Environmental Degradation

2112. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that liberalisation has aggravated the problems of environmental degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, pollution of air and water resources, dumping of imported toxic industrial wastes in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to ensure well-being and livelihood of the people?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The environmental norms/requirements have not been relaxed although the procedure for licensing/permit has been liberalised. As such there is no evidence of environmental degradation due to liberalisation.

(b) Various steps taken by the Government to control pollution and ensure the well-being of the people, include the following:—

- Effluent and Emission standards have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act for polluting industries. Besides, standards for ambient air and water quality have also been notified.

- Steps have been taken to control pollution from 17 categories of highly polluting industries.
- Twenty four critically polluted areas have been identified and Action Plans have been prepared for all the 24 areas for implementation by the various state Pollution Control Boards under the supervision of Central Pollution Control Board.
- Import of toxic waste is regulated under the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 and its amendment, 2000 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Environmental guidelines for siting and operation of industries have been brought out.
- Environmental clearance is made mandatory for 29 categories of developmental projects involving public hearing/NGO participation as an important component of EIA process.
- Environmental Epidemiological studies have been initiated in the different parts of the country to assess the impact of pollution on human health and suggest mitigative measures.
- For control of pollution from automobiles, stricter emission standards, introduction of unleaded petrol in major cities, installation of catalytic converters, introduction of low sulphur fuels and improvement in the fuel quality have been undertaken.
- A scheme for setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) in cluster of small scale industrial units has been taken up. 91 CETP projects have been taken up.

Import of Plastic Wastes

2113. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import of plastic wastes is increasing in our country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Justice R.N. Misra Committee has recommended a ban on the import of plastic wastes; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to check environmental hazards to health by plastic wastes?